Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE BRITISH ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION.

BY

EDWIN SWIFT BALCH.

The British Antarctic expedition under the command of Ernest H. Shackleton, which recently returned from the Antarctic, has achieved a most brilliant success, one of the greatest in Polar annals. Captain Shackleton was born in Ireland. He entered the British merchant service and was an officer of the Union Castle Line, when he was appointed one of the officers of the British National Antarctic expedition under Captain Scott. His portrait,* taken with the other members of the expedition, shows that he is a man of tremendous determination and will power, qualities which explain his achievement.

It is impossible as yet to say just how much Captain Shackleton has accomplished, as all the data so far at hand are a couple of meager cablegrams from the antipodes. Apparently, however, the following statements are approximately accurate.

The expedition started for East Antarctica in the sealer *Nimrod* during the antarctic summer of 1907-1908, and landed in McMurdo Sound near Cape Royds, in about 166° E. Long., 77° 50′ S. Lat. Here they wintered in a hut. They had with them an automobile, which, apparently, was a failure, and some ponies, that seem to have turned out even more useful than dogs. The expedition carried out two mainland journeys.

One party, consisting of Captain Shackleton and Messrs. Adams, Marshall and Wild, left Cape Royds in the beginning of November, 1908, returning there on March 4, 1909. They appear to have travelled southwards between the meridians of 162° and 172° East Long.; first over the surface of the Great Ice Barrier, until about S. Lat. 83° 33′. Here they discovered new mountain ranges trending south and southwest. Whether these barred the way south is not clear, but, at any rate, at this point the expedition ascended a great glacier and after this they remained at high altitudes, ascending at one place to 10,500 feet. On January 9, 1909, they reached 88° 23′ S. Lat., 162° E. Long., when they were 111 statute miles distant from the South Pole. At this spot they were on a plateau where no mountains were visible, and only a plain was seen stretching to the south.

---

* "The Voyage of the Discovery," Vol. I, p. 66.

From the data furnished so far it is impossible to tell whether the end of the Great Ice Barrier was reached, or in what direction exactly South Victoria Land trends south of Mount Longstaff, or what becomes of the mountain ranges.

The other party, composed of Messrs. David, Marson and Mackay, left Cape Royds on Oct. 5, 1908, and were gone for 122 days. They pushed up to the main ice cap of East Antarctica somewhere near McMurdo Sound, and then travelled northward until they arrived at the South Magnetic Pole, in S. Lat. 72° 25′, 154° E. Long., or, from another cablegram, 146° E. Long. Whichever of these two positions may be correct, the northern party had there arrived at Wilkes Land, as the first of these positions is due south of and close to Hudson Land, and the other is due south of and not far from Case Land. This northern party, therefore, not only discovered the South Magnetic Pole, but it also proved the continuity of the ice cap extending from Wilkes Land to the later discovered South Victoria Land.

On the homeward voyage also, apparently, when in 69° 48′ S. Lat., 166° 11′ E. Long., that is a little northeast of Cape North,, the expedition were able to see a mountainous coast extending for about forty-five miles west of Cape North, that is, in the direction of Hudson Land, another proof of the continuity of the coast of East Antarctica in this quarter.

In March, 1908, also, some members of the expedition made an ascent of Mount Erebus, reaching the summit, about 13,100 feet, on March 10. The crater, about half a mile in diameter and 800 feet deep, was ejecting great volumes of steam and sulphurous gas. There have been several previous mountain ascents in Antarctica; of Mount Gauss in King William II. Land, by Drygalski; and of Mount Abruzzi, 4,500 feet, in West Antarctica, by members of the Charcot expedition; but the ascent of Erebus is much the highest yet made.

Captain Shackleton and all the members of his party are much to be congratulated and admired for their splendid services to geography and terrestrial magnetism. They have not solved all the problems of Antarctica, but they have diminished the area of the unknown, by boring straight into the interior of the continent.

Is it not time for America to help in the scientific exploration of the continent whose existence was first made known to the world by Americans? Three years ago the Secretary of the Navy was approached to see whether a ship could not be sent to verify the discoveries of Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, U. S. N. But Mr. Truman H. Newberry turned down this request on the plea that there was no naval vessel then available for this work.

America has already allowed the Belgians, the Swedes, and the French, under de Gerlache, Dr. Nordenskjöld, and Dr. Charcot, to verify and examine scientifically all the lands discovered in early days in West Antarctica by American sealers. Dr. Charcot is now at work widening his former discoveries. Will America, in the same listless, indifferent spirit, permit other nations to verify the discoveries of our greatest Antarctic explorer, Charles Wilkes? It almost seems so. The Germans, under Dr. Drygalski, verified the existence of Termination Land. The British have now proved the existence of Hudson Land. America is doing nothing. One hundred thousand dollars would probably pay the bill for charting more carefully the coast of Wilkes Land. Half the officers of the United States Navy would probably volunteer at once for an Antarctic expedition. Either the Government or a private American ought before long to send one or two steam whalers to the Antarctic to keep up our reputation as sailors and explorers.

A GEOGRAPHICAL EXCURSION IN NORTHERN ITALY AND THE ALPS.

BY

H. F. CLELAND.

The unique experiment of conducting a geographical excursion in Europe, open to students of European and American Universities, was successfully tried by Professor W. M. Davis during June and July, 1908. The *personnel* of the party changed to some extent from time to time, geographers joining it for the study of a certain region and then leaving, perhaps to rejoin the excursion later. As a whole, however, the party changed little. The following are (from memory) the universities that were represented by students or professors for a few days, at least: Algiers, Berlin, Bern, Cambridge (England), Cincinnati, Lille, Lyons, Michigan, Grenoble, North Carolina, Vienna, Williams College.

The plan of study, as stated by Professor Davis, was to "treat [the physiographic problems] in accordance with the methods of